



THE INTERTEXTUAL AND COMPARATIVE- LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE HERO'S SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND EXISTENTIAL CRISIS IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S THE GREAT GATSBY AND SELECTED UZBEK NOVELS OF THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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Abstract

This article investigates the artistic interpretation of the hero's spiritual crisis in F.S. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and selected Uzbek novels of the independence period through the prism of intertextuality. The research focuses on the psychological, moral, and socio-cultural dimensions of crisis as represented in *The Great Gatsby*, Erkin A'zam's *A Walk under the Thunderstorm*, and Ulugbek Hamdam's *Balance*. Particular attention is paid to such issues as inner conflict, spiritual emptiness, alienation, the crisis of values, the relationship between the individual and society, and the opposition between material aspiration and spiritual need. The article argues that intertextuality in these works is not limited to direct textual references, but is manifested through common motifs, symbolic images, semantic parallels, and comparable models of human suffering. The comparison demonstrates that while Fitzgerald's novel presents spiritual crisis mainly through the collapse of the American Dream and the tragedy of individual illusion, Uzbek novels interpret it through the search for moral stability, conscience, family responsibility, and spiritual balance. Thus, the study reveals both universal and nationally specific aspects of the hero's spiritual crisis in American and Uzbek literary traditions.



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Introduction

The problem of the hero's spiritual crisis occupies a significant place in world literature, since literary works often portray not only external events, but also the complex inner world of a human being. In many major novels, the central conflict develops around the contradiction between dream and reality, individual desire and social pressure, material success and spiritual dissatisfaction, moral values and changing historical circumstances. Therefore, the spiritual crisis of a literary hero should not be understood merely as a psychological state. It is also an artistic and philosophical phenomenon that reflects the crisis of an epoch, the transformation of values, and the complicated relationship between the individual and society.

In twentieth-century American literature, this issue is closely connected with the concept of the American Dream. F.S. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is one of the most remarkable literary works in which this concept receives a tragic and critical interpretation. Through the image of Jay Gatsby, Fitzgerald reveals the illusion of material success, the fragility of romantic idealism, and the moral emptiness hidden behind external splendour. Gatsby becomes wealthy and socially visible, yet he remains spiritually lonely and emotionally unfulfilled. His entire life is directed toward the impossible aim of restoring the past and regaining Daisy, who becomes for him not only a beloved woman, but also a symbolic embodiment of beauty, social prestige, and unattainable happiness.

In Uzbek prose of the independence period, the spiritual crisis of the hero is also one of the leading literary problems. The works of Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam reflect the psychological consequences of social transformation, economic instability, moral uncertainty, and the search for spiritual support in a changing society. In *A Walk under the Thunderstorm* and *Balance*, the characters experience not only external difficulties, but also deep internal conflicts. They are forced to choose between material necessity and conscience, social adaptation and moral integrity, personal desire and family responsibility. In this sense, their



crisis is not simply individual suffering, but a process of self-awareness and moral evaluation.

The relevance of the present study lies in the comparative analysis of the hero's spiritual crisis in American and Uzbek novels on the basis of intertextuality. Intertextuality allows us to examine literary texts not as isolated artistic phenomena, but as works connected through motifs, symbols, images, semantic fields, and philosophical meanings. Julia Kristeva interprets intertextuality as a theoretical category which shows that every literary text is formed in relation to other texts and cultural meanings [1, p. 66]. From this perspective, *The Great Gatsby* and Uzbek novels of the independence period may be compared not because they repeat the same plot, but because they share common artistic concerns: alienation, spiritual emptiness, the collapse of ideals, the clash of values, and the search for meaning.

The study applies comparative-typological, intertextual, literary-analytical, psychological, and semantic methods of analysis. The comparative-typological method makes it possible to identify similarities and differences between American and Uzbek novels. The intertextual method is used to reveal common motifs, symbolic images, semantic parallels, and artistic models of spiritual crisis. The psychological method helps to analyze the inner conflicts, loneliness, alienation, suffering, and self-reflection of the characters. The semantic method is applied to interpret the meanings of key images and symbols such as the green light, thunderstorm, road, home, money, and family.

Intertextuality is one of the most important concepts in modern literary theory. It rejects the idea that a literary text exists as a completely independent and closed structure. Instead, it suggests that every text is connected with other texts, cultural codes, literary traditions, historical memory, and social meanings. A literary image, motif, or idea may echo previous works either directly or indirectly. Therefore, intertextuality reveals the continuity of literary thinking and the transformation of universal themes in different national literatures.

Roland Barthes regards the text as a field where different cultural codes, previous texts, and social meanings intersect [2, p. 146]. This idea is especially relevant to the study of the hero's spiritual crisis, because such a crisis is rarely limited to the personal life of an individual character. It usually reflects the contradictions of



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society, the instability of values, and the moral atmosphere of a particular historical period. Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*, Yusuf in *Balance*, and the characters of *A Walk under the Thunderstorm* are not merely private individuals. They are artistic figures who embody the inner conflicts of their age.

From the point of view of intertextuality, the spiritual crisis of the hero forms a common semantic field in different literary traditions. In *The Great Gatsby*, this crisis is connected with the falsification of the American Dream, the conflict between wealth and love, and the illusion of returning to the past. In Uzbek novels, spiritual crisis is associated with social change, economic pressure, weakening moral foundations, family responsibility, and the search for conscience-based stability. Although these literary contexts are different, they are united by one central idea: a human being cannot achieve true happiness through external success alone.

G rard Genette explains intertextuality through various forms of textual relations, including quotation, allusion, rewriting, parody, and architextual connections [3, pp. 2]. In the novels analyzed in this article, intertextuality is not primarily expressed through direct quotation. Rather, it appears at the thematic, symbolic, and philosophical levels. The selected works depict characters who lose inner balance, come into conflict with their society, suffer from spiritual emptiness, and search for the meaning of their existence. This creates a broad intertextual connection between Fitzgerald's American novel and Uzbek prose of the independence period.

In *The Great Gatsby*, the main source of Gatsby's spiritual crisis is the contradiction between dream and reality. Gatsby appears to be a successful and powerful man. He owns a luxurious mansion, organizes magnificent parties, and attracts the attention of society. However, behind this external splendour there is a lonely and vulnerable person who lives with an illusion. His wealth does not bring him inner peace, because it is not an end in itself. It is only a means of winning Daisy back and restoring the past.

Gatsby's tragedy is rooted in his inability to distinguish between real life and the dream he has created. His love for Daisy becomes idealized to such an extent that Daisy is transformed from a real woman into a symbolic object. She represents beauty, wealth, aristocratic status, and the promise of happiness. Gatsby does not



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simply love Daisy; he loves the ideal world that he associates with her. Therefore, his crisis is not only a romantic tragedy, but also the collapse of an illusion built on false values.

The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is one of the most important symbols in the novel. For Gatsby, it represents hope, desire, the future, and unattainable happiness. He looks at the green light as if it could connect him with Daisy and with the life he dreams of. However, this symbol also reveals the distance between dream and reality. Gatsby can see the light, but he cannot truly reach what it represents. By the end of the novel, the green light becomes a symbol of tragic illusion and the impossibility of restoring the past [4, p. 180].

Gatsby's spiritual crisis is intensified by the moral emptiness of the society around him. The world of Tom and Daisy is a world of inherited wealth, privilege, irresponsibility, and emotional coldness. They can destroy the lives of others and then retreat into their money and comfort. Gatsby, despite his wealth, remains an outsider in this society. He tries to enter the world of the upper class, but he is never fully accepted by it. His death exposes the selfishness and indifference of those who once enjoyed his hospitality.

Thus, Gatsby becomes a universal literary image of modern spiritual crisis. He is rich, but unhappy; socially famous, but inwardly lonely; devoted to love, but defeated by illusion; surrounded by people, but spiritually isolated. His tragedy shows that material success cannot compensate for the absence of moral truth, sincere love, and spiritual fulfilment.

In Uzbek novels of the independence period, the hero's spiritual crisis is interpreted in close connection with social transformation, economic hardship, family responsibility, and moral choice. The characters are often placed between two opposing forces: the material demands of the new era and traditional moral values such as honesty, conscience, patience, dignity, and responsibility. This conflict becomes the main source of their inner suffering.

Ulugbek Hamdam's *Balance* is one of the most important Uzbek novels in which the problem of spiritual crisis is represented through the image of Yusuf. The title of the novel itself indicates the central artistic idea: the search for balance. Yusuf lives in a period when society is changing rapidly, and people are forced to adapt to new economic and social conditions. He faces material difficulties, family



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concerns, professional uncertainty, and moral hesitation. His crisis emerges from the tension between the need to survive and the desire to preserve his conscience and human dignity.

Yusuf's inner state is revealed through his reflections, doubts, and painful questions. His dissatisfaction with life is not caused by laziness or weakness, but by the contradiction between his intellectual and moral aspirations and the harsh conditions of everyday reality. His internal question, close in meaning to "Is this really where I have arrived after studying so much?", expresses a deep psychological wound and disappointment with the direction of his life [6, p. 157]. This situation creates an intertextual parallel with Gatsby's crisis: both characters strive toward a desired life, but both encounter spiritual loneliness and dissatisfaction. However, Yusuf's crisis differs from Gatsby's. Gatsby is mainly the victim of an individual dream and romantic illusion. Yusuf's suffering is broader and more socially grounded. It is connected with family, livelihood, duty, conscience, and moral responsibility. If Gatsby tries to reconstruct the past, Yusuf tries to find a morally acceptable way to live in the present. For Gatsby, the central conflict is between dream and reality; for Yusuf, it is between material necessity and spiritual balance.

Erkin A'zam's *A Walk under the Thunderstorm* also presents spiritual crisis as an important artistic problem. The image of the thunderstorm in the title is highly symbolic. It does not simply refer to a natural phenomenon. It represents inner anxiety, moral disturbance, social instability, and psychological tension. To walk under a thunderstorm means to move through danger, uncertainty, and internal unrest. This symbol reflects the condition of the characters who try to understand themselves and their place in a changing world.

In Erkin A'zam's prose, the characters often evaluate their past, question their present, and experience dissatisfaction with the moral condition of society. Their crisis is expressed through memory, irony, internal monologue, symbolic situations, and meaningful details [5, pp. 74]. Like Gatsby and Yusuf, these characters are not merely participants in external events. They are people who struggle with their own inner world, with their conscience, and with the contradictions of their time.



A comparative analysis of *The Great Gatsby*, *Balance*, and *A Walk under the Thunderstorm* reveals several important intertextual commonalities.

Firstly, in all three works, external success or social adaptation does not guarantee inner peace. *Gatsby* has wealth and fame, but he remains spiritually empty. Yusuf tries to fulfil his responsibilities, but he cannot easily achieve moral and psychological balance. Erkin A'zam's characters continue to live within society, yet they feel internal discomfort and alienation. This shows that the real conflict takes place not only outside the character, but also within the human soul.

Secondly, the contradiction between dream and reality plays a central role in all the novels. *Gatsby* dreams of Daisy and the restoration of the past. Yusuf dreams of a more just and morally stable life. Erkin A'zam's characters compare their memories, hopes, and expectations with the reality around them. In each case, the distance between inner desire and external reality produces spiritual suffering.

Thirdly, the opposition between materiality and spirituality is a common source of crisis. In *The Great Gatsby*, wealth appears attractive, but it fails to satisfy the hero's spiritual needs. In *Balance*, material hardship complicates moral choice and increases psychological pressure. Everyday demands such as earning money, feeding the family, protecting oneself, and adapting to circumstances intensify the hero's internal conflict [6, pp. 186–187]. In Erkin A'zam's novel, the same contradiction appears through the characters' dissatisfaction with social relations and moral decline.

Fourthly, alienation is one of the major intertextual motifs in these novels. *Gatsby* is alienated from the upper-class world he wants to enter. Yusuf is alienated from the new social conditions that threaten his moral stability. Erkin A'zam's characters often feel distanced from their environment, social norms, and even from themselves. This alienation deepens their spiritual crisis and turns them into searching, reflective, and psychologically complex characters.

Fifthly, symbolic details play a crucial role in all the selected works. In *The Great Gatsby*, the green light, *Gatsby's* mansion, parties, automobiles, and the bay symbolize desire, distance, illusion, and moral emptiness. In *Balance*, the road, home, market, money, medicine, illness, and work reveal the social and psychological burden of the hero. In *A Walk under the Thunderstorm*,



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thunderstorm, movement, rain, danger, and natural disturbance symbolize inner unrest and spiritual instability.

Despite these common features, the novels differ in their cultural and philosophical interpretation of spiritual crisis. In *The Great Gatsby*, the crisis is closely connected with the American Dream. Gatsby believes that through wealth and self-creation he can transform his identity, gain social recognition, and recover lost love. However, the novel demonstrates that this dream is based on illusion. Gatsby's tragedy lies in the fact that he believes in the dream more than in reality. He does not fully recognize the moral emptiness of Daisy's world until it destroys him.

In Uzbek novels, spiritual crisis is more closely connected with collective consciousness, family relations, conscience, moral duty, and the search for inner harmony. Yusuf's problem is not only personal ambition. He suffers because he must find balance between the demands of life and the requirements of conscience. He cannot ignore material reality, but he also does not want to lose his moral identity. This makes his crisis more ethically and socially grounded.

Another important distinction is the role of society. In *The Great Gatsby*, society appears as cold, selfish, and indifferent. After Gatsby's death, almost everyone disappears, revealing the emptiness of the social relationships surrounding him. In Uzbek novels, society is more complex. Family, relatives, neighbourhood, colleagues, and social expectations may create pressure, but they may also function as sources of support. Thus, Uzbek novels present spiritual crisis not only as alienation, but also as a painful search for harmony within human relationships.

From this point of view, Gatsby is primarily the victim of an illusion, while Yusuf and Erkin A'zam's characters are seekers of moral-spiritual balance. Gatsby's dream is externalized through Daisy, wealth, the mansion, parties, and social status. In Uzbek novels, the search is more internal and is connected with conscience, patience, responsibility, dignity, family, and spiritual support.

Artistic details and symbols are essential in revealing the depth of the hero's spiritual crisis. In *The Great Gatsby*, the luxurious parties are especially significant. At first glance, they represent wealth, pleasure, and social success. However, in reality, they expose Gatsby's loneliness. The guests come to his



house not because they understand or respect him, but because they want entertainment. Thus, the parties become a symbol of false social relations and hidden spiritual emptiness.

The green light is another powerful symbol. It unites hope and impossibility, desire and distance, dream and illusion. Gatsby's movement toward the green light is a movement toward an ideal that can never be fully realized. Therefore, this symbol expresses the tragic nature of the American Dream itself.

In *Balance*, artistic details are more realistic and socially concrete. Money, illness, medicine, work, home, and market are not simple everyday objects. They reveal the pressure of life and the hero's moral struggle. Through these details, Hamdam shows how social conditions enter the human soul and create psychological tension. Yusuf's crisis is not abstract; it is deeply connected with the realities of everyday life.

In *A Walk under the Thunderstorm*, the thunderstorm functions as a symbolic image of instability and inner disturbance. It expresses fear, danger, uncertainty, and spiritual awakening. The act of walking under the thunderstorm can be interpreted as a metaphor for human existence in a difficult and unstable world. A person cannot stop living simply because the world is full of anxiety; he must continue walking, thinking, searching, and understanding himself.

Results and discussion

The analysis demonstrates that the spiritual crisis of the hero in *The Great Gatsby* and Uzbek novels of the independence period is a multidimensional literary phenomenon. It includes psychological, moral, social, and philosophical aspects. In both literary traditions, the hero experiences crisis because external life does not correspond to inner needs. Wealth, social position, family duty, or adaptation to society cannot automatically provide spiritual peace.

At the same time, the sources of crisis differ according to national and cultural contexts. In Fitzgerald's novel, the crisis is mainly produced by the collapse of the American Dream and the falseness of material success. Gatsby's tragedy reveals the moral emptiness of a society that values wealth but lacks sincerity and responsibility. In Uzbek novels, crisis is more closely related to the



transformation of society, the difficulty of preserving moral values, and the search for spiritual balance in everyday life.

From an intertextual perspective, the connection between these works is not based on plot similarity. It is based on shared motifs and semantic structures: dream and reality, materiality and spirituality, alienation, moral choice, spiritual emptiness, symbolic objects, and the search for meaning. These motifs show that the hero's spiritual crisis is a universal literary problem, although each national literature interprets it through its own cultural, moral, and historical experience.

Conclusion

F.S. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Uzbek novels of the independence period present the hero's spiritual crisis as a deep artistic and philosophical problem. In *The Great Gatsby*, this crisis is interpreted through the collapse of the American Dream, the contradiction between wealth and happiness, and the tragic power of illusion. Gatsby achieves external success, but he cannot find true love, inner peace, or spiritual fulfilment. His fate reveals the emptiness of a world where material prosperity replaces moral value.

In Uzbek novels, spiritual crisis is represented through social change, economic pressure, family responsibility, conscience, and the search for moral-spiritual balance. In *Balance*, Yusuf embodies the suffering of a person who tries to preserve dignity and conscience in difficult circumstances. In *A Walk under the Thunderstorm*, the characters' inner anxiety and search for identity are expressed through symbolic images and psychological reflection.

The intertextual analysis of these works shows that the hero's spiritual crisis appears in different national-literary contexts, yet its essence is connected with universal human contradictions: individual and society, dream and reality, material success and spiritual emptiness, moral duty and personal desire. Therefore, the spiritual crisis of the hero is not merely a psychological condition, but a significant literary phenomenon that reveals the meaning of human existence, the instability of values, and the necessity of spiritual choice.



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